

Washington, DC – Yesterday, Harry Teague continued his efforts to secure the US-Mexico border, punish drug smugglers, and bolster our national security with his vote for the Ultralight Smuggling Prevention Act. The bill, which received bipartisan support, will crack down on smugglers who use ultralights, single-pilot aircraft that are capable of flying low and landing and taking off quickly, to bring drugs across the border.

“The drug war being waged just across our border is continually changing and it’s time that the government gets ahead of the new tactics that drug smugglers are turning to in their efforts to continue their illegal trade,” said Harry Teague, Vice-Chair of the Congressional Border Caucus. “This legislation targeting ultralights will go after the newest method that the drug cartels use to smuggle drugs and make sure that those that the full weight of the law is used to crack down on smugglers and ensure that the drug violence does not spill over into the United States.”

As “ultralight vehicles” are not currently classified as aircrafts, this legislation will amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to include “ultralight vehicle” under the aviation smuggling provisions. This change will close an unintended loophole and give law enforcement the tools they need to prosecute these crimes to the fullest extent. Under this bill, individuals caught smuggling using ultralights can be prosecuted for using the aircraft in addition to being prosecuted for the drugs in their possession. When they are convicted of this new offense, they can receive a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. This bill will establish the same penalties for smuggling drugs on ultralights as for those who smuggle using airplanes or automobiles.

According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Air and Marine Operation Center (AMOC) based in Riverside, California, 193 suspected incursions and 135 confirmed incursions by ultralights occurred from October 1, 2009 through April 15 of this year. In October 2008, AMOC detected an unidentified, northbound, low-flying aircraft 12 miles west of Nogales,

Arizona. A CBP surveillance helicopter was launched from Tucson and the low-flying aircraft was identified as an ultralight. The pilot landed southwest of Marana with 223 pounds of marijuana on board. In November 2008, field laborers arriving for work near San Luis discovered a crashed ultralight, a dead pilot, and 141 pounds of marijuana. And in December 2008, the pilot of an ultralight collided with power lines and crashed southwest of Tucson. The pilot had been carrying 350 pounds of marijuana when he crashed.

As Vice Chair of the Congressional Border Caucus, Harry Teague has consistently called for a robust, comprehensive strategy to address the violence along the border. In addition to co-sponsoring several border security funding bills in an effort to expedite these critical resources to the border, he called on the President to [send the National Guard to the border](#) to address the growing national security threat there and led 50 of his colleagues in [requesting supplemental funding](#) to step up border security, including funding for National Guard on the border. Congressman Teague has also called on President Barack Obama to [convene a White House Summit](#) with the aim of building a policy to address the border violence crisis, ensure that the violence does not spill over into the United States, and help America get back to work building our border economies.

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